

L Test Changes FAQs

Q) If the test centre has a car park, will that be the only car parked used for bay parking exercises or will public car parks also be used once the forward parking is introduced?

A) The reverse (park) exercise into a parking bay will be carried out, as at present, at the start or end of the test in test centre car parks.

The forward park into a bay will generally be carried out on the test route away from test centres. This is to replicate the real-life scenario of going into a car park, driving forward into a bay to load something in the rear of the car and then driving off again.

There may be some very limited instances where this is carried out on the DVSA estate. For instance if there is a route that goes past another test centre car park (sometimes the case in larger urban areas), if a route goes back past the test centre (very unlikely when we are looking to use routes on more open, faster roads), or if the configuration of the car park allows the real life scenario above to be re-enacted.

So in summary, the vast majority of test centres will conduct the forward park only on the route and the reverse bay park only in the test centre car park. There may be some local circumstances that dictate a different practice.

Q) How long was the driving test trial?

A) The trial ran for just over two years and over four thousand people took part.

Q) In December, how will I know what test my pupils will take?

A) The current test will remain running up to, and including, the 3 December 2017. The new test will commence on the 4 December, so the first test out on the 4 December will be the new test.

Q) Will the 20-minute independent drive be one continuous drive or will it be broken down into sections?

A) This will be a continuous 20-minute drive. The sat nav will already have all routes programmed in, so it will just be a case of the examiner bringing up a route and pressing play for the start of the independent drive.

Q) I think it is illegal to park on the right hand side of the road. Isn't this contravening Rule 239 of the Highway Code?

A) This manoeuvre is legal. The DVSA have consulted with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). It possibly isn't best practice, however with guidance from the experts (ADIs) they will show how to do this safely and legally, and address the moments when the pupil shouldn't do it. When the concepts have been taught, the learner needs to then generalize these skills with other roads to fully understand when to and when not to carry out this exercise. So, when it comes to the test the learner should have a thorough understanding of where, and where not to, do this. The ADI will also teach their pupil when they need to dim their lights before performing the manoeuvre to avoid causing any hazards to oncoming cars, and generally better equipping their student as a full licence holder to make better decisions when unaccompanied.

Q) Will the examiner's sat nav show the speed limit?

A) Yes it will. Speed camera alerts will be disarmed but the speed limit will be visible.

Q) Do I go with the speed on the car's speedometer or on the sat nav?

A) Your speed should be governed by the car's speedometer and road signs, rather than the speed shown on the sat

nav. If the road signs have changed and there is a new 40mph limit in place ahead where it used to be 60mph, the sat nav may still show 60mph, but in fact you need to obey the road signs over what the sat nav says. The examiner will not be quoting the speed limit and the candidate should not worry about the speed on the sat nav.

Q) When pulling up on the right, if there is a large vehicle ahead, this will reduce the driver's visibility. Will the examiner be able to assist the candidate when pulling away or is the candidate expected to deal with this alone and possibly reverse further than two car lengths?

A) If a big vehicle has just pulled up in front of you, then the examiner could tell the candidate to reverse back a little more to allow for the extra vision needed to pull away safely. If the candidate pulls up on the right and reverses back two car lengths, the examiner would expect that this manoeuvre is complete. The examiner would be expected to give some assistance when required in certain circumstances – this will all be part of the examiner's training.

Q) Will the instruction for the parallel parking manoeuvre be given on the move or will the candidate be asked to pull up, be given the instruction and then complete the exercise?

A) The examiner will ask the candidate to pull up prior to this manoeuvre.

Q) What will happen if the candidate refuses to pull up on the right due to their misinterpretation of Rule 239?

A) If the candidate refuses to carry out a legal requirement and go against the test, after it has been through a trial, research and public consultation, the examiner would be within their right to terminate the test as the test wouldn't be legal in terms of fulfilling all of the requirements.

Q) What happens to the sat nav during the test when not being used for the independent driving section?

A) The sat nav will be running for the entire test in the background showing roads on the display, but it will only be giving directions for 20 minutes when undergoing the independent drive.

Q) When will the independent drive be done during the test?

A) The independent drive section can be done at any point during the test. It could be at the start, in the middle or at the end.

Q) How many people were in favour of the new test?

A) From the research, 88% of people were in favour of the independent driving, 71% supported the inclusion of sat navs, 79% were in support of the modified manoeuvres, and 78% agreed to the vehicle safety question being asked on the move.

Q) Will the forward parking section be done between two vehicles?

A) This is up to the candidate. They will not be expected to park between two vehicles but they can if they choose. The wording for this will be delivered on the move and also for the pull up on the right exercise.

Q) Will the sat nav be stable enough in the event of a crash?

A) The sat nav will be placed on a mat in the centre of the dashboard, unless the candidate wishes it to be repositioned or the mat cannot be placed there for any reason. The examiner will attach it to the windscreen if need be. The mat is very stable and the DVSA have road tested these thoroughly, including conducting emergency stops at 70mph on their off road track at Cardington.

Q) Will the examiner need to plug the sat nav into my cigarette lighter?

A) The sat nav will come with an additional battery pack attached to the back of them so the likelihood of this happening is very minimal. The examiners will not be unplugging anything from the car already plugged in, i.e. in-car cameras.

Q) Why drive into a parking bay and reverse out? Surely it is safer to reverse in?

A) Yes, it is safer to reverse in and drive out and this is best practice, however if you need to put shopping into the boot of your car, you would need easy access and so would tend to drive in forwards. More motorists drive in a parking spot than reverse back in, generally, to use the boot. Plus, car park design often dictates whether people drive in or reverse in.

Some ADIs don't teach people to drive in, as it can be trickier to park this way, and the competency required to do this is quite challenging. You are actually using the same skill set as you would for a turn in the road, and these are transferable skills but in a much more realistic and challenging environment.

Q) Is the UK the only country to use sat nav on the driving test?

A) Other countries, such as Holland and Spain for example, currently use sat navs in their tests, plus other countries have come to look at what the UK is doing and possibly mirroring some of our changes for their tests.

Q) Will doing the 'show me' question on the move add value to the test?

A) The intention is there certainly, but it is currently carried out in a sterile environment, i.e. whilst stationary. Also, the candidate will only pick up a driving fault if they say 'I don't know', so currently it adds some value but not as much as it could.

The 'tell me' question will still be asked while stationary, for example the candidate could get a tyre question incorrect. The examiner won't mark this driving fault down straight away as they want to see what happens with the 'show me' question. The examiner might ask: "Olivia, show me how you would wash and clean the windscreen". The examiner will do this at a safe opportunity and so won't do this as the candidate is approaching a set of lights or about to change gear - they will show some common sense whilst asking this question. For example, if Olivia drifts across the road whilst using the wash/wipe, then this will turn into a serious fault, marked under 'vehicle checks'.

Q) Is pulling up on the right illegal?

A) No. The DVSA liaised with ACPO on this issue and it is legal.

Q) Where are you going to conduct the pull up on the right exercise?

A) The DVSA are not limited to doing this down quiet roads, nor will it be conducted on a busy road. The best way to think about the location for this is it will be conducted in the road before you would do a turn in the road currently. This allows the test to keep flowing better as there isn't the need to go into the quiet residential areas as much, so the DVSA can keep the test in more challenging areas, exposing people to the areas where they have questions when they pass.

Q) Why increase the independent drive from 10 to 20 minutes?

A) Research has shown that it will improve road safety with new drivers. Removing diagrams from the test but keeping traffic signs, as we know, adds value. Moving towards greater use of technology in the car to get from A to B is very common as most people use a sat nav.

Q) What other reasons are there to include the sat nav?

A) When the independent drive was first introduced, the DVSA had to find suitable routes for this part of the test. The issue was that the road signs were not so good on routes they came up with and so they had to adapt their routes according to where the road signs were. The sat nav allows greater flexibility with route planning, allowing them to cover wider areas and also introduced an element of distraction into the test that the candidate needs to manage. With good training, people will better manage this plus research has shown that people who have been exposed to sat nav training take fewer risks once passed.

Q) So the turn in the road and left reverse are being removed completely from the driving test?

A) Yes. We still have reversing into the bay at the test centre and parallel parking. Driving forwards into a bay will be done at another car park during the test.

Q) What car parks are being used for the new test?

A) The DVSA have liaised with the British Parking Association (BPA) and also B&Q have allowed use of their car parks, however we all need to be mindful not to overcrowd these areas. They are getting more car parks on board to help spread the load as ADIs need to practice as well so we are not overloading these car parks.

Q) I'm concerned about pulling up on the wrong side of the road during the winter months or at night. The headlights blind oncoming traffic. It's a dangerous manoeuvre at these times of day.

A) Part of the training ADIs will need to provide must cover this important aspect of headlights when pulling up or parked. This should be covered anyway when pulled up on the left and equally so on the right.

Q) Are the new tests going to cover rural roads?

A) Yes, whenever and wherever possible. The inclusion of the sat nav allows for more flexible routes for the new test whereas with the current test, the routes are more limited in where they can go. With the extended independent driving section and sat navs, this will allow the routes to include more challenging and higher risk roads, adding more value to the test.

Q) Where will the sat nav be placed in the car on test?

A) In the first instance the examiner will place it in the centre and on the dashboard on a mat. These are very sturdy and have been through lots of testing off road at Cardington for how secure it is and also on lots of different makes and models. The mat has gone through a thorough risk assessment on speeds up to about 70mph. If this doesn't work due to the shape of the car, the examiner will attach it to the windscreen if needs be.

Q) Will the examiner get out and check the gap between the car and kerb on the right reverse?

A) This is similar to the left reverse. They are not necessarily looking for a parked and finished position. If it is too far away from the kerb the examiner will know. They can tell if the car is near the kerb or not without getting out. There shouldn't be an occasion when the examiner will need to get out of the car to check. The main faults will possibly be hitting the kerb when pulling up, rather than being too far away. Over 2000 candidates have done this on the trial and there hasn't been any examples of this to date.

Q) Will we have to disable auto lights for the test so the candidates can show how to turn them on if asked?

A) If the vehicle has auto lights on and the candidate is asked to show the headlights are working on the move, then the candidate could simply turn the switch off and back on again to demonstrate they know what to do.



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Q) Will the show me questions on the move be published?

A) These have already been published and can be found on the GOV.UK website – link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/car-show-me-tell-me-vehicle-safety-questions/car-show-me-tell-me-vehicle-safety-questions-from-4-december-2017>



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